

UCLA Faculty Association

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Friday, May 16, 2025

Two Abstentions

We have been posting about the discussions at the Regents this past week about deferring certain pension contributions. CIO Bachhar, at the Investments Committee on Tuesday, noted the incompatibility of the desire for full (100%) funding of the pension and deferring contributions in response to a question by Regent Makarechian. Senate Chair Cheung, at a full board meeting on Wednesday, supported the deferral. When the proposal - as Item F6 - came up for discussion and a vote at Finance and Capital Strategies later that day, Makarechian again raised the issue. You can see the discussion that followed at:



<https://ia600101.us.archive.org/14/items/3-board/Regent%20Makarechian%20on%20deferring%20pension%20funding%205-14-2025.mp4>.

In the end, the committee voted for the deferral plan with Makarechian and Regent Cohen - a former state budget director - abstaining.

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Our previous posts on this issue are at:

<https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/05/not-on-same-page.html> and

<https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/05/a-cautionary-note-on-pension-finance.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: [pension](#), [UC budget crisis](#), [UC Regents](#), [ucrp](#)

Grateful for cuts (that are smaller)

From the [LA Times](#):

...The proposed cut to UC dropped from \$397 million in January to \$130 million four months later, representing a 3% year-to-year budget cut... Newsom's revised budget "represents a significant improvement from the January budget," said UC President Michael V. Drake, who spoke during a UC regents meeting Wednesday in San Francisco. "It means so much in this moment when the state is facing difficult budget choices." In a statement, Drake added that the proposed budget "minimizes cuts to vital student support services and preserves critical investments like affordable student housing construction." ...

As previously announced, the governor also said he wanted to defer the [UC's] annual 5% budget increase that [is] part of a multiyear compact with the state...

Full story at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-05-15/uc-csu-higher-education-newsom-california-budget>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: [Drake](#), [governor](#), [politics](#), [UC budget crisis](#)

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Not on the same page

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Remaking the University

- [Betrayed: UC Is About to Make \\$267 Million in Unnecessary Budget Cuts, Harming Instruction and Undermining Goodwill with the State Legislature and Governor \(Guest Post\) - 5/30/2025](#)
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As blog readers will know, we posted yesterday about Chief Investment Officer Bachhar's cautionary response at the Regents on Tuesday to the proposal to defer certain pension contributions in the light of budget pressures.* Academic Senate Chair Cheung, however, endorsed the proposal to defer at the Wednesday meeting of the Board:

<https://ia600101.us.archive.org/14/items/3-board/Senate%20Chair%20Cheung%20on%20deferring%20pension%20funding%205-14-2025.mp4>.

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*<https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/05/a-cautionary-note-on-pension-finance.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [8:19 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [pension](#), [UC budget crisis](#), [UC Regents](#)

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 4



From the [NY Times](#): *The Trump administration [this past] Tuesday canceled an additional \$450 million in grants for Harvard University, a fresh broadside in the clash between the federal government and the oldest university in the country. There were no new accusations leveled at Harvard in a statement announcing the latest cuts, issued by the administration's task force on antisemitism. Instead, government officials accused the school of not resolving the "pervasive race discrimination and antisemitic harassment" they described as "plaguing" the campus in Cambridge, Mass.*

...The task force did not detail which grants were being canceled, though it said eight federal agencies were involved in cutting off money. The officials said the \$450 million in cuts were on top of \$2.2 billion the administration had already frozen. A Harvard spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment.

...In late April, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission opened an investigation into whether Harvard and its affiliates had discriminated against white, Asian, male and heterosexual applicants and training program participants. The Washington Free Beacon first reported that investigation on Monday.* ...

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/13/us/politics/trump-harvard-grants-450-million.html>.

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*You can read the EEOC investigation notice at:

<https://ia600402.us.archive.org/9/items/2-final-hjaa-report.-the-soil-beneath-the-encampments/Harvard%20EEOC-Charge-Against-Harvard%204-25-2025.pdf>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [diversity](#), [Harvard](#), [politics](#)

Do I sense a computer SNAFU? - Part 3

If you are a really faithful blog reader, you will recall a couple of postings about what appeared to be one of those grand computer system failures that UC has specialized in. But this one seemed to be just at UCLA. The [Daily Bruin](#) has apparently done an investigation of the Ascend affair - despite apparently not receiving much cooperation from the powers-that-be. It appears to be a \$200+ million flop. To put it in perspective, you could buy three defunct Catholic college campuses in Palos Verdes that nobody knows what to do with for that kind of money!

Here are some excerpts from the Bruin's [exposé](#): *UCLA has spent at least \$213 million on the Ascend Finance Transformation project, and yet, seven years after the project's launch, it has few concrete accomplishments. "I can't say that I've actually seen a live screen for Ascend," said Reem Hanna-Harwell, a former member of the project's steering committee. The initial reported budget for the project was \$120 million, but, according to a presentation given during*

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the May 2024 Ascend 2.0 quarterly town hall, the estimated total cost was projected to be roughly \$286 million.

The university declined to answer exactly how much money has been spent on the project since its official start date in April 2018. The Ascend project involves a transformation of UCLA's financial system – moving from the current mainframe system to Oracle Cloud, modernizing the chart of accounts and upgrading all business applications which contribute data to the central finance, research and budget systems, according to the 2021 project charter. The project, directed by Digital and Technology Solutions, formerly known as IT Services, intended to replace UCLA's outdated legacy financial systems software, designed in the 1980s when the university's operating budget was just 7% of its current size.



UCLA has failed to provide documents relating to the project requested by the Daily Bruin over 180 days ago, despite last estimating that they would be made available Feb. 28. The law mandates that public records should be turned over “within a reasonable period of time,” according to guidance from the California Attorney General’s Office...

According to the DTS website, the only accomplishment [of the project] seems to be the modernized application BruinBuy Plus. UCLA has not transitioned from the mainframe financial system to Oracle Cloud or fully implemented the UC-wide Common Chart of Accounts, a process the University of California Office of the President mandated to be complete by July 2023...

In the first four months of the software's use, a backlog of over 50,000 unpaid invoices accumulated, causing monthslong delays in payments. In response, project leaders assembled a “Tiger Team” in April 2024 to stabilize BruinBuy Plus, successfully reducing the backlog – though not without consequences. These delayed payments and high outstanding balances caused some vendors to refuse future purchase orders made by the university. Other businesses, however, continue to accept them, despite persistent challenges in receiving payment. Ramin Messian, the owner of Enzo's Pizzeria, said that around 30% of the purchase orders UCLA sends to his business are incorrect or never paid. Meanwhile, the university owed Lamonica's NY Pizza nearly \$25,000 last year, according to an assistant general manager...

Having already spent more than \$213 million with limited visible progress, questions about the project's long-term viability and eventual cost remain. A UCLA spokesperson said the university will provide an update on the finalized plan later this year, seven years after the official start of the project.

Full sad story at <https://dailybruin.com/2025/05/13/one-timeline-after-the-other-was-not-met-uclas-213-million-project-is-failing>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:15 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

The May Revise



The governor's May Revise budget is out. At the macro level, the state is running a deficit this year which - when you add up the draw down of the various reserves associated with the general fund (GF) - is around \$13 billion The projection for next year is a deficit of just under \$19 billion. The state got a lot of capital gains related to past stock market rise. A repeat is not expected for the coming fiscal year.

\$Million	2024-25 Surplus/Deficit		2025-26 Surplus/Deficit	
GF Balance July 1	\$	41,886	\$	34,321
Revenue & Transfers	\$	225,673	\$	214,559
Expenditures	\$	233,238	\$	226,376
Surplus/Deficit	\$	(7,565)	\$	(11,817)
GF Balance June 30	\$	34,321	\$	22,504
Public School Account	\$	-	\$	-
Safety Net Reserve	\$	(900)	\$	-
BSA (rainy day fund)	\$	(4,267)	\$	(7,100)
Total reserves	\$	(12,732)	\$	(18,917)

Source: <https://ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf> and <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2024->

25/pdf/Enacted/BudgetSummary/SummaryCharts.pdf to get estimates of reserves as of June 30, 2024. The latter numbers may not be the latest estimates, but they are what is available.

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What about UC and the various "deferrals" of what was supposed to be paid under the "compact" with the governor that were proposed back in January? They seem to be still there in May. As we have pointed out, promises for next year are not in the hands of the governor. They are in the hands of a future legislature. The governor said in his May Revise budget news conference that he really, really means to deliver on the deferrals next year. We will see.

You can see the May Revise news conference at:

<https://ia600107.us.archive.org/25/items/becerra-announces-for-governor-4-2-2025/newsom%205-14-2025%20May%20Revise.mp4>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 11:53 AM

No comments:

Labels: governor, legislature, State Budget, UC budget crisis

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 3



From the [NY Times](#): *Harvard University struck a respectful but firm tone in a letter to the Trump administration on Monday, arguing that the university and the administration shared the same goals, though they differed in their approaches. It was latest move in an extraordinary back-and-forth between the school and the federal government in recent weeks.*

The letter from Alan M. Garber, Harvard's president, was sent a week after the Trump administration said it would stop giving Harvard any research grants. Last month, the university took the government to court over what it has called unlawful intrusion into its operations. But on

Monday, Dr. Garber's tone was softer, saying he agreed with some of the Trump administration's concerns about higher education, but that Harvard's efforts to combat bigotry and foster an environment for free expression had been hurt by the government's actions. Dr. Garber said he embraced the goals of curbing antisemitism on campus; fostering more intellectual diversity, including welcoming conservative voices; and curtailing the use of race in admissions decisions...

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/12/us/harvard-response-trump-letter.html>.

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The letter is below: [Click on image to clarify.]

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

(617) 495-1300

Massachusetts Hall

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon

Secretary of Education

US Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202

Dear Madam Secretary:

I write in response to your letter of May 5, 2025. As your letter suggests, we share common ground on a number of critical issues, including the importance of ending antisemitism and other bigotry on campus. Like you, I believe that Harvard must foster an academic environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression, and that we should embrace a multiplicity of viewpoints rather than focusing our attention on narrow orthodoxies. I also believe that Harvard cannot achieve these objectives if open debate undertaken in good faith is unwelcome. And you and I have a shared interest in ensuring that American universities continue to be global leaders in innovative and life-saving research that benefits all Americans, boosts the national economy, and serves the country's interests. Finally, there is no question that Harvard must follow the law.

Harvard's efforts to achieve these goals are undermined and threatened by the federal government's overreach into the constitutional freedoms of private universities and its continuing disregard of Harvard's compliance with the law. It ignores the many meaningful steps we have taken and will continue to take to live up to our principles and improve the lives of people across the country and throughout the world. That is why we have gone to court to address the government's unlawful attempt to control fundamental aspects of our university's operations. Consistent with the law and with our own values, we continue to pursue needed reforms, doing so in consultation with our stakeholders and always in compliance with the law. But Harvard will not surrender its core, legally-protected principles out of fear of unfounded retaliation by the federal government.

With respect for you and your office, I recount briefly what we have done and will do to uphold the highest standards of academic excellence, combat antisemitism and all forms of discrimination, ensure ethical governance, and continue our efforts to improve all of our activities. Our agenda touches on all aspects of university life with a view to making Harvard a better place for our entire community.

Harvard has had significant changes in its leadership and governance over the past year and a half. I was appointed interim president in January 2024. Since I took office, we have installed a new provost, new deans for four of our schools, and new fellows of the Harvard Corporation. In each instance, we have recruited exceptional leaders to guide our community going forward. We have also centralized and clarified our disciplinary structures and procedures to make them more consistent, fair, and effective.

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Harvard has implemented a comprehensive, institution-wide strategy to combat antisemitism and other bigotry through policy and discipline reforms, academic investments, community support initiatives, and educational programs. These actions reflect our commitment to ensuring that Jewish and Israeli students, faculty, and staff experience a campus environment free from discrimination, harassment, or marginalization. As you are aware, last month Harvard released the *Report of the Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias* and the *Report of the Task Force on Combating Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias*. These reports detail an extraordinarily painful year for our community in the wake of the October 7, 2023, Hamas assault on Israel. The challenges of that academic year have led to meaningful reform and recommendations designed to eliminate antisemitism and other forms of hate from our campus, which [we have detailed publicly](#). As an institution of higher learning, we also understand that education is vital to fostering understanding and mutual respect on our campus and have made substantial investments in expanding the academic study of Judaism and related fields. These actions, from policy implementation to academic investment to community support, demonstrate Harvard's commitment to combating bigotry in all its forms.

I have also spoken out about the need for greater intellectual diversity on campus and have commenced initiatives to make Harvard a more pluralistic and welcoming place. Knowing that Harvard, like many universities, has more work to do on this front, we intend to implement and expand these initiatives in the coming months.

I must refute your claim that Harvard is a partisan institution. It is neither Republican nor Democratic. It is not an arm of any other political party or movement. Nor will it ever be. Harvard is a place to bring people of all backgrounds together to learn in an inclusive environment where ideas flourish regardless of whether they are deemed "conservative," "liberal," or something else, a place where assumptions and claims are tested and challenged, respectfully and thoughtfully, in pursuit of knowledge and truth.

For that reason, we are exploring approaches, consistent with law, to foster and support a vibrant community that exemplifies, respects, and embraces difference. As we do so, we are sharpening our focus on individuals and their unique characteristics rather than their race. Admission to any of Harvard's schools is based on academic excellence and promise, including measures such as grades and the standardized test scores required for undergraduate applicants. In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions* and before admitting the next class, we took additional steps around the university to ensure compliance with the law. We continue to refine our efforts to identify and admit students who will contribute to our academic community through their openness and capacity for constructive dialogue and civil discourse. We also seek to identify other aspects of talent and excellence. These ongoing efforts to foster an environment where open inquiry and mutual respect flourish, not only in classrooms but also throughout residential and social settings, are intended to build empathy and understanding, and to enhance all aspects of learning.

Our international students are vital members of our community who must meet the standards of performance and conduct we expect of our US students. They enrich our community in many ways. We are aware of no evidence for the allegation that they are collectively more prone to disruption, violence, or other misconduct than any other students. They come to this country and

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to Harvard to learn and achieve at the highest levels, just as our US students do. Their presence, talents, and scholarly contributions enrich our campus community and our nation.

Employment at Harvard is similarly based on merit and achievement. We seek the best educators, researchers, and scholars at our schools. We do not have quotas, whether based on race or ethnicity or any other characteristic. We do not employ ideological litmus tests. We do not use diversity, equity, and inclusion statements in our hiring decisions. We hire people because of their individual accomplishments, promise, and creativity in their fields or areas of expertise, and their ability to communicate effectively with students, faculty, and staff. And we take all of our legal obligations seriously, including those that pertain to faculty employment at Harvard, as we seek to offer our students the most dynamic and rewarding educational experience that we can.

I hope you will take my response to your letter in the spirit in which it is intended: to convey Harvard's unwavering commitment to compliance with the law, to the elimination of antisemitism and other bigotry on our campus, and to academic excellence. These goals are not unique to Harvard, nor are we alone in confronting the challenge of achieving them. As is true of many other research universities, we have taken important steps to improve our campus and achieve our mission, while recognizing that our work will never be done. Research universities, including Harvard, have had a long and productive relationship with the federal government. That relationship has driven economic growth, innovation, and life-saving discoveries to the benefit of our nation and all humanity. We hope that the partnership between higher education and the federal government will be vibrant and successful for generations to come. As my colleagues and I have said, we welcome the opportunity to share further information with you about the important work we are undertaking to combat prejudice and to pursue our mission of excellence in teaching, learning, and research.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Garber

Source: <https://dn721605.ca.archive.org/0/items/2-final-hjaa-report.-the-soil-beneath-the-encampments/Harvard-President-Alan-M.-Garber%20letter-to-the-Honorable-Linda-E.-McMahon%205-12-2025.pdf> or <https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/05/Letter-from-Harvard-President-Alan-M.-Garber-to-the-Honorable-Linda-E.-McMahon.pdf>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:35 AMNo comments: 

Labels: diversity, Harvard, politics

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